

Lehi Roller Mills

By Carl Mellor

In 1905, Lehi Businessmen formed a Co-op and built the Lehi Roller Mills. The first sack of flour was produced on 2 April 1906. Full daily capacity was sixty to seventy bushels. In 1905, Dr. John A. Widstoe came to Lehi and gave a lecture on growing dry land wheat in Cedar Valley. In 1906, many Lehi residents filed on dry farming homesteads in the Cedar Valley area and thus began the source of high quality protein wheat always demanded by the Lehi Roller Mills. In 1907, the Lehi Roller Mills advertised for 5,000 bushels of wheat for 75 cents per bucket.

In 1909 a George G. Robinson leased the mill. Robinson from the age of sixteen to nineteen had apprentices as a miller with his father in Delaware. He had worked for his uncle at American Fork as a miller and was miller at Chipman's Flour Mill before coming to Lehi. In 1910, he purchased the mill and increased capacity to 110 barrels daily. In 1915, Robinson contracted with Birrell Engineering Company to construct a 43,000 bushel capacity grain elevator. In November 1925, the Lehi Roller Mills took orders for eighteen carloads of flour from bakeries in Utah and California. The cars were for Turkey Red Flour, five cars for Peacock Flour, (soft wheat) and three cars were for whole wheat.

George Robinson built a grand home on the south west corner of Fifth West and First East. His daughter Velma Robinson Russon told the writer (Carl Mellor) of the greatness of her father. He was not only a respected miller and businessman, but was a modern day Elijah as far as the widows and poor of the old Lehi Second Ward were concerned. Robinson freighted flour in wagons to the coal mine communities of Carbon County and would return to Lehi with wagons of coal. Many widows and poor in the community had their coal bins filled with coal, and their flour bins mysteriously filled with flour, during the darkness of night, often in answer

to the prayers of those who had no coal to heat their homes nor bread to feed their families.

After George's death in 1936, his sons Sherman and Raymond continued to operate the mills. Today his grandson, R. Sherman Robinson, now deals with the grandchildren of those who dealt with this grandfather. In the 70's and 80's, Robinson instigated a thorough modernization process installing important Swiss milling equipment that produced production. In 1993, the mill produces one thousand 100 pounds bags of flour every twenty four hours. Currently twenty different kinds of specialty flours are shipped to Utah, Colorado, Arizona, Nevada, and California. Sixty per-cent of the flour produced in Lehi is shipped out of state. Th Lehi Roller Mills is growing at the rate of thirteen per-cent per year and has grown 156% since 1980.

More than any other business in Lehi. The Lehi Roller Mills is the visual business image of Lehi. Tell anyone you are from Lehi and they respond "that's where the flour mill is." World wide, people recognize the Lehi Roller Mills as the backdrop for many of the scenes in Paramount's 1984 blockbuster movie, Footloose.